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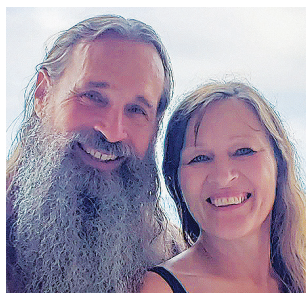
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Cultivating Wellness with Hormonal Balance

Happy May! As we welcome the vibrant energies of spring, we find ourselves eagerly anticipating the simple joy of digging our hands into the soil and planting the seeds not only for this season's garden, but also for health and happiness.

This month at *Natural Awakenings*, we are sprouting with excitement to bring you an issue dedicated to an often overlooked yet crucial aspect of our well-being: hormonal health. As many of you know, maintaining hormonal balance is as essential as tending a garden—it requires care, attention and a bit of know-how, which we are thrilled to share with you.

In line with our theme, our feature article dives into natural strategies for supporting hormonal health through every stage of life. We've gathered insights from leading experts and compiled strategies that promise to enlighten and empower you. Whether you're dealing with the waves of menopause or the flux of monthly cycles, there's something in this issue for everyone.

Each season in the garden teaches us something new about patience and care, and I've found that these lessons apply beautifully to

managing our hormonal health as well. Just as our gardens require the right balance of sunlight, water and nutrients, our bodies need a harmonious blend of rest, activity and nutrition to navigate the natural changes that come with age.

Personally, I have donned my gardening gloves and started planting as soon as the soil was workable. There's something profoundly satisfying about working with the earth, watching things grow, and knowing that with each plant, you're not just cultivating your garden, but also nurturing your soul. It's a perfect metaphor for our own lives—growth takes time, patience, and a little bit of mess. But oh, the rewards are bountiful!

As we dig into another season, remember that you are never alone in your journey. Like the plants in our gardens, we may weather a few storms, but our vibrant blooms will stand as a testament to our resilience and care. May your gardens flourish and your spirits bloom even brighter. Here's to a spring filled with growth—both in our gardens and within ourselves.

Grab your favorite gardening tool—be it a spade or this magazine—and let's get to planting!

With warmth and wellness,

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natural
awakenings

LOCAL CONTACT

734-757-7929

Publisher@HealthyLivingMichigan.com

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Distribution **Gordon Kutella**
JP Pausch
John & Trina Voell III

Website Design **Locable**

Website & Social Media **Carolyn Coogan**
SherTech

NATIONAL TEAM

CEO **Kimberly B. Whittle**

National Editor **Sandra Yeyati**

Editor **Brooke Goode**

Copy Editor/Proofing **Melanie Rankin**

Layout **Flip180 Media**

NATIONAL CONTACT

Natural Awakenings

Publishing Corporation

350 Main Street, Suite 9B

Bedminster, NJ 07921

Ph: 239-206-2000

NaturalAwakenings@KnoWEwell.com

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Natural Awakenings is a network of natural lifestyle magazine publishers empowering local communities with knowledge, resources and connections to lead healthier lives on a healthy planet.



Cinnaholic Bakery Caters to All Occasions with Plant-Based Offerings

Cinnaholic Bakery provides a unique catering service for all events, offering an array of 100 percent plant-based, dairy-free, lactose-free, egg-free and cholesterol-free treats. With over 20 frosting flavors and an assortment of fresh toppings, Cinnaholic has been celebrated for its high-quality and decadent desserts, even gaining national attention on the *Shark Tank* TV show.



Specializing in customizable dessert experiences, Cinnaholic provides everything from DIY bars for hands-on fun to full-service catering for any kind of event, including client gifts, holiday events and staff appreciation. Their famed wreath cakes are the go-to choice for a memorable corporate gift, and their collaboration with local small businesses further emphasizes their community support.

“The heart of Cinnaholic is creativity and community,” states owner Doug Moeller.

“Every dessert we craft is a celebration of flavor and a testament to our dedication to quality and well-being for people, animals and the planet.”

Cinnaholic’s entire menu is adaptable to meet the specific needs of any event, ensuring a personalized and unforgettable dessert experience. Whether it’s mixing and matching menu items or crafting a signature dessert, the possibilities are endless.

Location: 121 E. Liberty St., Ann Arbor. To place orders or for more information, call 734-707-1955 or visit CinnaholicAnnArbor.com. See their buy any roll get one free deal in their ad on page 22.

PolarAid Health Unveils Ground-breaking Wellness Technology

PolarAid Health now offers its innovative wellness device, a testament to the pioneering science of Nikola Tesla and Dr. Georges Lakhovsky. PolarAid, a portable, hand-held tool, harnesses cosmic energy frequencies to



revitalize and support optimal body functions. The tool, requiring no maintenance and lasting indefinitely with proper care, offers users an easy and effective way to enhance well-being.

The foundation of PolarAid’s technology was first demonstrated by Tesla in 1899, who recognized the vital energy supporting all life forms. Lakhovsky’s subsequent inventions in the 1920s and ‘30s further developed these concepts by creating devices that revitalized cells and strengthened bodily functions. Today, Dr. Dino Tomic has refined this technology to produce PolarAid, designed to clear energy channels and nourish the body at a cellular level.

Tomic states, “After extensive research into both medical and bioenergy medicine, I am convinced that PolarAid represents a significant advancement in health technology. It puts the power of wellness into the hands of individuals, allowing them to lead healthier lives.”

The device has received numerous testimonials praising its effectiveness in improving various health aspects, including muscle flexibility, metabolism, mental health and more. It is celebrated for its simplicity and the profound impact it has on users’ health without the need for electronic components or maintenance.

To place orders or for more information, call 450-486-7888 or email Info@PolarAidHealth.com. See ad page 21.

EHM Senior Solutions: Where Compassion Meets Innovation

EHM Senior Solutions provides a long-standing tradition of excellence and compassion in senior care, rooted in its historic inception in 1879. From its humble beginnings as the Zoar Society, EHM has evolved to



become a beacon of support and innovative care for seniors across southeast Michigan. At its facility in Saline, EHM offers a comprehensive range of services including skilled nursing, memory support, rehabilitation and home care, all tailored to meet the diverse needs of its community.

Thomas Hosinski, President and CEO of EHM Senior Solutions, emphasizes the organization’s commitment, “At EHM, we strive every day to provide not just care, but a quality of life that respects each individual’s journey and honors their dignity.” This approach is evident in the variety of lifestyle and healthcare options available to residents, from independent living to specialized memory support.

In addition to high-quality medical and nursing care, EHM Senior Solutions is dedicated to the holistic well-being of its residents. The facility features an array of amenities and programs designed to enrich the lives of its community members, ensuring they enjoy a vibrant, engaging and supportive environment.

Location: 440 West Russell St., Saline. To schedule a visit or for more information, call Elaine at 734- 429-1631 or email her at DexterE@ehmss.org, or call Kelly at 734-429-1628 or email her at RobertsonK@ehmss.org.

Julie Woodward Empowers Individuals with Holistic Coaching and Mindful Practices

Julie Woodward, a holistic coach and yoga instructor, is transforming lives through her unique approach to wellness, which integrates yoga, mindfulness and nature hikes. Through her business, she helps individuals reconnect with their inner wisdom and the natural world, fostering personal growth and emotional resilience.



Julie Woodward

Woodward offers a variety of services tailored to meet the needs of her clients. These include personalized wellness coaching, yoga for resilience classes available both in-person and virtually and mindfulness hikes in Washtenaw County's scenic parks. Her programs are designed to improve mental and physical health by teaching self-regulation techniques and deepening self-awareness.

"The journey to wellness is both personal and universal. My goal is to provide the tools and support necessary for profound, sustainable change," Woodward states. Her methods draw on her deep love of nature, the timeless wisdom of yoga and meditation and contemporary insights from neuroscience and psychology.

Clients of Woodward have reported significant benefits, including enhanced calm, better mood regulation, and a newfound freedom from habitual patterns. Her services are particularly valued for their ability to empower clients to lead soul-led lives, aligned with their deepest values and aspirations.

To schedule an appointment or for more information, call 734-657-6605 or email jawh@comcast.net.

Argus Farm Stop Supports Over 200 Local Farms with Innovative Market Model

Argus Farm Stop continues to revolutionize the way communities support local agriculture. Established in 2014, this pioneering enterprise has expanded to three locations in Ann Arbor, providing a year-round marketplace



for over 200 local farms. Unlike traditional markets, Argus allows farmers to set their own prices and keep 70 percent of sales, fostering a sustainable agricultural economy. Their model not only supports

local farms, but also offers consumers access to the freshest locally grown produce, meats and other goods.

"We believe in nurturing our local food systems and providing our community direct access to fresh, sustainably grown food," says Kathy Sample, co-founder of Argus Farm Stop. "Our markets empower local farmers and consumers, changing the way our community thinks about and engages with local food."

In addition to daily operations, Argus Farm Stop hosts events and workshops aimed at spreading their successful model and encouraging other communities to adopt similar practices. Their online platform and delivery service extend their reach, ensuring accessibility to high-quality local products year-round.

For more information, email Kathy@ArgusFarmStop.com.

Norb Lighting Illuminates the Way for Senior Eye Health

As the population of adults over 65 in the U.S. continues to increase, expected to grow by 22 percent by 2040, the need for enhanced health and wellness solutions grows with it. A crucial, but often overlooked component



in senior health is lighting. Norb Lighting, with its natural sunlight mimicry, provides a critical solution for the unique needs of aging eyes.

Norb Wellness Lighting significantly improves the living conditions for seniors through various features, such as full-spectrum sunlike lighting that provides the necessary brightness aging eyes require. Dr. Havish Bhalani, an eye care specialist, emphasizes, "Aging eyes need 70 percent more light than those in their 30s. This is due to the thickening of the eye's lens and a decrease in photoreceptor density."

Norb Lighting's products like NorbSMILE, NorbEVERYDAY-SUN and NorbFOCUS offer unparalleled visibility and color rendering, crucial for seniors to safely manage daily tasks and navigate their homes. The near-perfect Color Rendering Index (CRI) of Norb products ensures that colors appear vivid and true, compensating for the yellowing of the lens that occurs with age.

Moreover, Norb Lighting supports the natural circadian rhythms critical for maintaining a healthy sleep-wake cycle. "Our products like NorbSMILE during the day and NorbSLEEP in the evening are designed to emulate the natural progression of sunlight, aiding in better sleep patterns and overall cognitive function," states Nick Andrew, Norb Lighting's CEO.

The adaptability of Norb Lights to individual needs with features like dimmability and compatibility with shades further aids in minimizing glare, reducing eye strain, and enhancing the comfort of seniors' living environments.

For more information, call 616-502-0265 or email ClaireReenders@gmail.com.



A Rise in Adult Seasonal Allergies

Seasonal allergies are not just a concern for children and can develop or worsen as we age. According to Dr. Gailen Marshall, president of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, the prevalence of seasonal allergies among adults has increased, with

about a quarter of U.S. adults reporting allergies compared to 19 percent of children.

Allergies occur when the immune system mistakenly identifies harmless substances such as pollen or grass as threats, leading to symptoms like sneezing, runny nose and itchy eyes. Moving to a different region with different pollen seasons can also trigger adult-onset allergies. Societal and environmental shifts such as climate change, globalization and air pollution have contributed to the increased prevalence of allergies among individuals of all ages.

While it is possible for children to outgrow their allergies, it is more challenging for adults to do so. Lifestyle changes, such as spending more time indoors or moving to another region, may help some individuals see improvement in their symptoms. Immunotherapy, which involves gradually exposing the person to small amounts of their allergen, is known to be an effective treatment for allergies regardless of when symptoms start.

Trends in Non-Alcoholic Drinking Habits

A 2023 Gallup Poll found that 62 percent of adults aged 18 to 35 say they drink alcoholic beverages, down from 72 percent two decades ago. The poll noted that young adults also drink less frequently and are less likely to drink to excess. As a result, bars like Happy Accidents, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, are increasing non-alcoholic



options to cater to young consumers. The bar offers five mocktails that use ingredients such as matcha, garam masala and capsaicin oils to create complex and flavorful alcohol-free alternatives.

Mingle Mocktails was created by a recovering alcoholic looking for a way to feel included during social outings

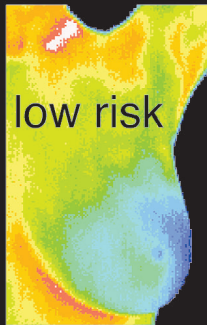
while choosing not to drink alcohol. Mingle offers flavors such as Key Lime Margarita and Cucumber Melon Mojito that are available in ready-to-drink cans, as well as in bottles for more premium mixing. NielsenIQ reports consistent double-digit growth in the non-alcoholic beer, wine and spirits market. The movement toward non-boozy alternatives is praised by experts for its positive impact on health and well-being, including improved sleep, energy, mental clarity, immunity and mood.



Nature Lowers Risk of Osteoporosis

In a study published in *Annals of the Rheumatic Diseases*, scientists investigated the effects of green spaces on osteoporosis and bone mineral density by analyzing data held in the UK Biobank of almost 400,000 people with an average age of 56, just over half of whom were women.

In addition to the participants' bone mineral density, the researchers calculated annual average exposures to air pollutants, such as nitrogen oxide and particulate matter, based on residential postal codes. Those living closer to green spaces, natural environments



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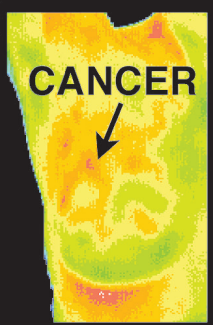
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and domestic gardens had greater bone mineral density and a five percent lower risk of developing osteoporosis. In addition to air pollution, the scientists noted that psychological stress and physical activity levels appeared to influence the impact of green spaces on osteoporosis risk.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the prevalence of low bone mass, a precursor of osteoporosis in adults 50 and older, is 51.5 percent in women and 33.5 percent in men. Osteoporosis weakens bones; increases the risk of fractures, chronic pain, reduced mobility and disability; and reduces quality of life. It affects nearly 20 percent of women and 4.4 percent of men.



Low-Dose Calcium Supplementation in Pregnancy

Hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, which include preeclampsia, complicate 2 to 8 percent of pregnancies and are estimated to cause 45,000 maternal deaths annually worldwide. These disorders are also associated with an increased

risk of preterm birth, the leading cause of death among children worldwide.

Calcium supplementation of 1500 to 2000 mg per day, divided into three doses, during pregnancy has been recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) since 2011 to reduce the risk of preeclampsia in populations with low dietary calcium intake. Previous trials of high-dose calcium supplementation of at least 1000 mg per day reduced the risk of preeclampsia by more than half and the risk of preterm birth by 24 percent. However, only a few countries have implemented routine high-dose calcium supplementation in pregnancy due to adherence concerns and high cost.

The findings of two independent, randomized trials conducted in India and Tanzania to compare the efficacy of low-dose calcium supplementation (500 mg per day) to high-dose calcium supplementation (1500 mg per day) in reducing the risk of preeclampsia and preterm birth was recently published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. In each trial, 11,000 first-time pregnant women were enrolled. The results indicate that low-dose calcium supplementation was as effective as the high-dose in terms of the risk of preeclampsia. The trial in India, but not the one in Tanzania, showed that the low-dose calcium supplement was as effective as the high-dose with respect to preterm birth.

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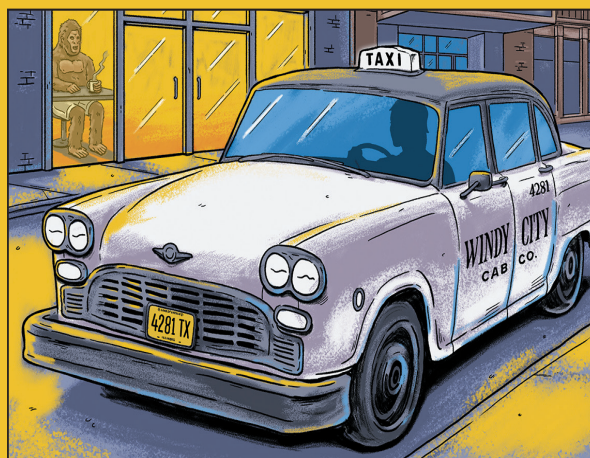
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Balancing Women's Health the Natural Way

In Saline, a quiet revolution in women's health care is taking place at Thrive Wellness Center. Founded by Dr. Shannon Roznay, a chiropractor and nutrition response testing practitioner, this center champions a holistic approach to health, treating patients by emphasizing natural balance and minimizing medical intervention.

Roznay and her team at Thrive Wellness Center focus on addressing the root causes of health issues rather than merely managing symptoms. This approach, centered around personalized care and natural remedies, attracts a diverse clientele, ranging from young girls to older women grappling with menopausal challenges. She explains, "We aim to correct underlying health issues through lifestyle dietary modifications, quality sleep, and nutritional balance, which form the cornerstone of our practice."

Patients at Thrive benefit from a detailed assessment that utilizes muscle testing to pinpoint imbalances in the body's systems such as thyroid, ovaries or adrenals. This method guides the all-female staff in crafting individualized treatment plans that often include natural supplements and herbs, reducing the need for pharmaceuticals and their associated risks.

Thrive's approach is especially beneficial for women at various life stages. Roznay and her team specialize in balancing hormonal systems using diet, herbs, homeopathy and whole food supplements. They also address hormonal issues indirectly related to organs like the liver, crucial for hormone balance and detoxification. "It's about more than just supplying hormones; it's facilitating the body's own healing mechanisms," she adds. For many patients, the results are transformative. Women dealing with PCOS, recurrent miscarriages or the typical symptoms



of menopause often find relief through Thrive's tailored programs. "Many times, simple changes in diet or the introduction of specific supplements can drastically improve our patients' health," Roznay notes.

Education is a key component of the patient experience at Thrive. The center is dedicated to educating women on how to sustain and enhance their health long term, empowering them to make informed decisions about their wellness. This commitment extends beyond individual treatment plans to include workshops and community talks aimed at demystifying aspects of women's health that are often overlooked in conventional healthcare settings.

"We see health as a complex interplay of factors—diet, stress, sleep, and hormonal balance all weave together to form the tapestry of a person's well-being. Our job is to untangle the threads that have gone awry and restore harmony naturally," Roznay shares. As Thrive Wellness Center looks to the future, plans are underway to expand its educational outreach and continue provid-

ing exceptional care. The clinic's success stories and the high number of referrals speak volumes about its impact. Thrive has become a beacon for those seeking natural health solutions, and it plans to keep building on this foundation with new programs that reach even more members of the community.

The effectiveness of Thrive's approach is perhaps best illustrated by its patients' experiences. Testimonials often highlight the personalized care and significant health improvements seen after visiting the center. One patient remarked, "Following the birth of my first child, I experienced severe hormonal imbalances that were not adequately addressed with conventional medicine. Turning to Thrive, I found a program that worked for me, leading to lasting wellness without reliance on medications."

Location: 148 South Industrial in Saline. For appointments or more information, call 734-470-6766 or visit Thrive-Wellness-Center.com. See ad page 17.



Experience Ann Arbor's Homeopathic Sanctuary

In the heart of Ann Arbor, nestled within Washtenaw county, lies a sanctuary of healing and wellness: Castle Remedies. Managed by Caitlin Potere, an herbalist who studied in the fields of premedical and pharmaceutical sciences, this establishment is more than a store; it's a vibrant community hub dedicated to the holistic health journey of every individual who walks through its doors.

Potere, with her rich background in herbs and homeopathy, including extensive studies under renowned herbalists and at prestigious centers like David Winston's Center for Herbal Studies, has transformed Castle Remedies into a haven for those seeking alternative paths to health and well-being. As a volunteer coordinator for the Great Lakes Herb Faire, her passion for herbalism and homeopathy not only enriches her life, but also serves as a guiding light for others.

What sets Castle Remedies apart is not just the vast array of over 1,000 homeopathic remedies it houses, making it a unique resource for those in search of rare and effective solutions, but also the ambiance of positivity and warmth that greets every visitor. Potere believes that the good energy permeating the space is a testament to the love and dedication she and her staff pour into their work daily. This, combined with the store's commitment to offering high-quality, third-party-tested nutritional supplements, reassures customers of the integrity and purity of the products on their shelves.

At the core of Castle Remedies' philosophy is a profound respect for homeopathy, a system of medicine developed over 200 years ago. By focusing on the individual as a whole, rather than isolated symptoms, homeopathy embodies the essence of holistic treatment.



Whether addressing common ailments like menstrual cramps, with remedies like Magnesia phosphorica and Colocynthis, or more complex conditions, the approach is always personalized, underscoring the importance of understanding the unique needs and experiences of each person.

Women's health, in particular, receives special attention at Castle Remedies. From supporting hormonal balance with well-known remedies like Pulsatilla and Sepia to offering kits tailored for life's milestones, such as pregnancy and birth, the store ensures that women of all ages find solace and solutions in their offerings. The homeopathic Birth Kit is perfect for midwives and pregnant women, and the Infant's Kit makes an excellent gift for new parents. "We're not just selling products; we're facilitating key milestones in people's lives, providing comfort and healing in very personal ways," says Potere.

Beyond homeopathy, Castle Remedies offers a wide selection of supplements and herbal formulas designed to support stress management and overall wellness. Products like Nerve Tonic by Hyland's Naturals,

StressCalm by Boiron and the renowned Bach rescue remedy provide natural relief for anxiety and stress, showcasing the store's dedication to offering safe, effective alternatives for mental health.

For those seeking guidance, Castle Remedies stands as a pillar, directing customers to a network of esteemed holistic practitioners within the community. The store's commitment to education extends to offering classes and resources for those looking to deepen their understanding of homeopathy and holistic health.

Located in a distinctive Purple Victorian house that mirrors a castle, Castle Remedies is not just a business; it's a cornerstone of the community, promising a future where holistic health and wellness are accessible to all. With Potere at the helm, the journey towards health is imbued with knowledge, compassion and a deep-rooted belief in the power of natural remedies.

Founded in 1983, Castle Remedies continues to grow and serve the community, its commitment to quality, education and personalized care remains steadfast. Whether a long-time advocate of holistic health or newly curious about alternative medicine, Castle Remedies welcomes everyone to explore a world where health is holistic, treatments are tailored, and everyone is treated with the utmost care and respect. In the bustling city of Ann Arbor, this castle of remedies stands not only as a testament to the enduring power of natural medicine, but also as a sanctuary for all who seek healing and wellness on their own terms.

Location: 2345 South Huron Pkwy., Ann Arbor. For more information, call 734-973-8990, email info@CastleRemedies.com or visit CastleRemedies.com. See ad page 15.



The Road to Hormonal Harmony

Find Balance and Thrive

by Marlaina Donato



Like a well-built home, the human body's quality of life depends upon a sturdy foundation. A complex, hormonal matrix determines our vitality and impacts major areas of health, including growth and development, stamina, sleep cycles, bone health, blood sugar levels, fertility, weight and mood. Fifty hormones take turns keeping us alive, as well as impacting lesser concerns such as hair and skin quality.

Excessive stress, certain pharmaceutical medications, hormonal contraception, autoimmune diseases and, in rare instances, tumors can throw the body into metabolic chaos. Supporting these fundamental allies through lifestyle changes that include a nutrient-packed diet, improved gut health, supplementation and medication, when needed, can help us get back on track. Most importantly, prevention is possible with the same approach.

"Hormones are the behind-the-scenes influencers, ensuring your body operates smoothly and adjusting to the ever-changing demands of your environment and internal states. When this delicate balance is thrown off, the consequences can be widespread, affecting virtually every aspect of your health," affirms North Carolina-based hormone specialist Deborah Matthew, M.D., author of *This*

Is Not Normal: A Busy Woman's Guide to Symptoms of Hormone Imbalance.

Even a slight imbalance of certain hormones—whether a deficiency or an excess—can compromise digestion, raise low-density lipoprotein (“bad” cholesterol), downgrade sex drive, foster cognitive issues, amp up anxiety and even affect heart rhythm. Lifestyle factors like smoking, poor diet and lack of exercise also play a role in disturbing equilibrium. Matthew explains, “Hormones are chemical messengers that coordinate many functions well beyond the realm of reproductive health. They are produced by your endocrine glands and circulate through your bloodstream, delivering critical instructions to every tissue and organ.”

Oxytocin and Other Key Players

Like orchestra players, hormones work together, but the hormone oxytocin is the conductor. Hormones such as estrogen and testosterone, as well as the neurotransmitters dopamine and serotonin, cannot be produced or used properly without oxytocin. Good gut health also depends on it. “The most powerful hormone in our body, hands down, is oxytocin. It also happens to be an alkalizing hormone and helps oppose the negative, chronic effects of cortisol, our stress hormone,” says Anna Cabeca, a triple-board-certified OB-GYN and author of *The Hormone Fix*, *Keto-Green 16* and *MenuPause*. “Oxytocin is what we refer to as the love and bonding hormone. It’s also a longevity hormone—muscle-regenerating, mood-elevating, pain-relieving and immune-boosting. It is vital to have a high level of it if we want to boost and support the other hormones.”

Cabeca recommends boosting oxytocin naturally. “It can be as simple as thinking of something that puts a smile on your face, brings you joy and happiness, makes you laugh or gives you that warm fuzzy feeling inside,” she explains, adding that cultivating a sense of gratitude “will help boost your oxytocin level and reduce your stress hormone cortisol, which, when too high, leads

to inflammation and acidity.” Her other go-to oxytocin allies are funny movies, being in nature, hugs, intimacy, therapeutic massage and activities with others like yoga classes, hiking or team sports.

The symbiotic relationship between the thyroid and our stress-fighting adrenal glands is also fundamental in systemic harmony. A 2015 study published in *European Thyroid Journal* revealed that 5 percent of patients with autoimmune thyroid disease also had an underlying primary adrenal insufficiency. An older study published in *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism* in 2009 showed that 41 percent of patients with compromised adrenal function also suffered from hypothyroidism.

“In today’s high-stress environment, our cortisol production can become dysregulated. This is often called ‘adrenal fatigue,’ although that term is not recognized by the conventional medicine world,” says Matthew. “This cortisol dysregulation often results in profound tiredness, cravings for salt or sugar, reliance on caffeine for energy and difficulty handling stress.” She notes that despite its widespread occurrence, adrenal compromise slips between the cracks of conventional diagnosis. Recognizing the interconnectedness of bodily systems is vital.

“A holistic approach to thyroid and adrenal health considers the entire spectrum of an individual’s health, lifestyle and emotional well-being,” Matthew says. “Holistic practitioners often employ comprehensive testing to uncover subtle imbalances, utilize natural supplements like adaptogenic herbs to support function and recommend dietary and lifestyle changes that address underlying causes of thyroid and adrenal symptoms.”

Fertility Factors

For many, planning a family is one of life’s high points, but according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 13 percent of married women under the age of 30 struggle to conceive; about 22 percent of married women between ages 30 and 39 are hit the hardest. The frustration can be agonizing. “I often say that infertility is not a

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diagnosis; it's a symptom," attests Aumatma Simmons, a double-board-certified naturopathic doctor, endocrinologist and fertility specialist at the Holistic Fertility Institute, in Berkeley, California. "When we consider infertility as a symptom, we start understanding that it is the check-engine light that our body is giving off, trying to tell us something is out of whack. Maybe it's the hormones or something somewhere else in the body. The root causes must be discovered and addressed."

Common contributors to infertility include amenorrhea (absent periods) caused by physical or emotional stress, weight extremes (obesity or underweight) and age. Simmons underscores the role of diet and lifestyle in both women and men. "It is well-researched that lifestyle habits like smoking, alcohol and marijuana can contribute to fertility and pregnancy outcomes. Additionally, there is ongoing research about the role of sedentary lifestyles and body mass index as potential indicators of pregnancy outcomes. Even blood sugar and inflammation in the male partner can impact fertility, as well as a woman's ability to carry a pregnancy to term."

Simmons directly attributes food habits to egg and sperm quality, asserting, "Diet is vital in the role of implantation. There are studies that have shown that gut inflammation contributes to uterine inflammation, which directly affects implantation and pregnancy outcomes." She also connects the dots between the mental and emotional health of both parents and baby success. Negative talk, poor self-esteem, responsibility overload and an inability to let go or ask for help can also foster infertility.

What We Can Do

Taking a few steps toward a more balanced body can go a long way. Cabeça emphasizes, "Deep, restorative sleep is essential to regenerate and rebalance. Physical activity is absolutely necessary for hormone circulation throughout the blood and lymphatic



Andrey Cherkasov from Getty Images/CanvaPro

system, so doing things that make you huff and puff and sweat daily is critical." She also recommends alkalizing the diet by amping up hydration and fortifying meals with low-carbohydrate food sources, low-glycemic fruits like berries, leafy greens, cruciferous vegetables and sprouts. Adding intermittent fasting to the mix also packs a positive punch, especially as progesterone and estrogen levels decrease with age and we have a higher risk for developing insulin resistance.

Everyday foods for hormonal happiness include healthy, high-fat foods like avocados, raw butter, ghee, egg yolks (rich in choline and iodine for healthy thyroid function), soaked nuts and seeds, flaxseed, hemp and olive oil; clean proteins like quinoa, organic pasture-raised poultry and beef, wild-caught fish, lentils and beans; and spices like turmeric, cinnamon, cumin, garlic and fresh cilantro. Avoid trans fats, sugar and refined carbs, which trigger inflammation and disrupt hormonal balance.

Matthew recommends cortisol-lowering activities like meditation, yoga and breathwork, which help balance cortisol levels, improve our resilience to daily stressors and support overall hormonal health. She also stresses the importance of seven to nine hours of restful sleep by "establishing a consistent bedtime routine, minimizing exposure to blue light from screens before bedtime and creating a sleep-conducive environment in your bedroom. Many of your hormones are produced at night while you are in a deep sleep." More shut-eye also regulates stress hormones and helps to repair the body's cells and tissues.

Life is better when our bodies are happy, and change begins with small, inspired steps. Cabeça reminds us, "Create a life rhythm that works for you."

Marlaina Donato is a visionary artist, composer, author of several books and long-time journalist for Natural Awakenings. Connect at BluefireStudio.art.



Giving Back to Mother Earth

by Marlaina Donato

Most of us can remember the first time we felt soft, cool grass under our bare feet or noticed sweet ozone in the air after a wild thunderstorm. The sometimes-incompressible wonders of Gaia sustain our existence, boggle our minds and inspire us to contemplate our place in the great universal order. Our love affair with this beautiful planet begins early, but it is easy to forget this sacred partnership in the mundane whirlwind of adult life. Like any other vital relationship in our lives, it is all too easy to take it for granted and allow ourselves to put forth minimal effort.

Whether we till the soil in our backyards, pick up trash along a hiking trail, choose eco-friendly cleaning products or simply pause to witness a glorious sunset, we are all custodians of the Earth. Fighting the good fight to decrease our toxic impact, preserve our woodlands and clean up our oceans can



Trade Latin from Getty Images Signature/CanvaPro

seem overwhelming, and like most dedicated caregivers, sometimes we feel weary.

We can gain a second wind by setting aside the alarming to-do lists and focusing on what is being accomplished daily. When

we choose to weave simple tasks into the tapestry of ordinary days, our children learn by example, and the chain remains unbroken. Most importantly, fulfilling our part in the whole need not be boring, too serious or time-consuming—it can be downright joyful.

Ways to give back to the planet:

- Plant a pollinator-friendly backyard or patio flower garden.
- Buy local produce and farm products whenever possible.
- Post short, informative social media posts about our allies: the bees, bats and opossums.
- Use less plastic.
- Go paperless when paying bills.
- Nix lawn chemicals, leave a portion of grass to go to seed and opt for green lawn care.
- Plan a local family vacation and support the neighboring economy.
- Learn creative ways to reuse, recycle and upcycle.
- Get more exercise and save on gasoline by walking to local businesses when possible.

Marlaina Donato is an author, visionary painter and composer. Connect at [BluefireStudio.art](https://www.BluefireStudio.art).

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Anna Cabeca

on The Hormone Fix

by Sandra Yeyati

Known as “the girlfriend doctor”, Anna Cabeca is triple board-certified in obstetrics and gynecology, integrative medicine, and anti-aging and regenerative medicine. With 30 years of experience helping women optimize hormones and invigorate their sex lives, she is also certified in functional medicine and bioidentical hormone replacement therapy. Cabeca is the bestselling author of *Keto-Green 16*, *The Hormone Fix* and *MenuPause*. She has also developed a line of well-researched natural care products to relieve common issues such as vaginal dryness, incontinence, loss of libido and hormone imbalance, as well as nutritional supplements that complement her Keto-Green diet plans. She offers three online masterclasses, including Breeze Through Menopause, Sexual CPR and Magic Menopause.



What prompted you to develop the menus and recommendations in your books?

They stem from my own journey through early menopause at age 39 and being told there was nothing I could do but suffer or take an antidepressant. Following an early version of my diet and lifestyle program, I was able to delay menopause and have my daughter.

When I hit age 48, I started to gain weight and experience mood swings, brain fog, crashing fatigue, and an inability to concentrate or sleep through the night, which led me to develop my keto-green, or keto-alkaline, approach.

Can women relieve hormone-imbalance symptoms without medications?

Yes. We can reduce 80 to 90 percent of symptoms in the first two weeks, and 90 percent over another couple of months, with natural interventions and no pharmaceuticals. My plans focus on the right nutrition and intermittent fasting to facilitate detox, support metabolism, increase insulin sensitivity and maintain an alkaline state.

We also work on developing a positive mindset, getting good sleep by resetting

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your circadian rhythm, reducing stress, eliminating toxins, and testing, which helps you manage and chart your progress. Then I will consider adding hormones. For menopause and postmenopause, research says we do better with some hormone support.

What is the basic principle behind balancing hormones?

Getting your body to make and use your own natural hormones in a healthier, more efficient way. We do that with detox and by improving the sensitivity of the most powerful hormones in our body. It takes more than hormones to fix your hormones. More than 90 percent of the relief comes from food and lifestyle improvements.

What hormones do you target in The Hormone Fix, and why?

When it comes to regulating and navigating the menopausal transition, you have to focus on the major hormones, which are insulin, cortisol, adrenaline and oxytocin. There's a hormone hierarchy. I compare it to a university where the students are all the hormones in our body—close to 50 of them—and they each have their own purposes and responsibilities. Teachers are like insulin, cortisol and adrenaline because they regulate the

classrooms. If you have an unhealthy professor that allows students to do whatever they want, there'll be chaos in the classroom. The most powerful hormone—the president of the university—is oxytocin, the hormone of longevity and quality of life.

Can you describe your Keto-Green diet?

The Keto-Green medicinal menus support your body's detoxification and the metabolism of your hormones. They include high-quality protein, high-quality fats and alkalizing vegetables and fibers to support the gut and estrogen metabolism. To avoid the antibiotics and hormones in meat, we focus on nutritious, organic, wild-caught and grass-fed foods.

Can you explain the alkaline component of the plan?

A higher alkaline urine pH is associated with less metabolic disease (diabetes, hypertension and heart disease) and stronger bones. A more acidic diet takes you into a catabolic, breakdown state, instead of a build-up, nourishing state. We become more alkaline by eating alkalizing vegetables and decreasing the acid load caused by things like sugar, stress, alcohol and dehydration. I have people measure and monitor their urine pH.

What recommendations do you have for loss of libido?

Sexual health is important for optimal health. We want to be fully functioning and capable in what we call the second spring of our lives. It's hard to feel romantic on your dinner date with your husband or boyfriend when you're hot-flashing or your clothes don't fit comfortably. Getting your sexy back is about feeling good in your own skin, being healthy, reaching a happy weight, feeling strong and having good energy, all of which come from healthy eating and healthy hormones.

What advice do you have for staying motivated on our health journeys?

If you're hitting a plateau, work with an integrative practitioner or join a group that is working on a common goal to motivate you through healthy community. One of my patients the other day said, "You told me to have more fun, so I started taking dance lessons. I haven't taken them in 30 years, and it's so much fun." Be sure to bring more fun into your life. Fun is the ultimate motivator.

Sandra Yeyati is the national editor of Natural Awakenings magazine.



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Balancing Gluten

Making Peace With an Oft-Maligned Ingredient

by Deborah Bevilacqua

The rise in prevalence of celiac disease and related conditions, and shifts toward paleo, keto and other gluten-free diets, have driven the gluten-free products market from \$973 million in 2014 to \$6.5 billion in 2022. The market for these products is expected to reach \$15.1 billion by 2032 according to The Brainy Insights, a market research company. However, switching to gluten-free products is not a one-size-fits-all decision.

Celiac disease affects an estimated 1 percent or approximately 3 million Americans, although approximately 60 to 70 percent of those have not been diagnosed, according to the Celiac Disease Foundation. The illness is an autoimmune condition that results in tissue damage in the small intestine, which may be accompanied by abdominal pain, gas and bloating, cognitive impairment, constipation, diarrhea, anxiety, fatigue, anemia, skin rashes and joint pain. It is diagnosed with blood tests and confirmed by taking pictures inside of the small intestine.

The National Institutes of Health report an additional 6 percent of Americans may have a related condition known as non-celiac gluten sensitivity (NCGS). While some symptoms of intolerance or sensitivity to gluten are similar to those with celiac disease, NCGS does not come with intestinal damage. Symptoms of NCGS also may occur outside the intestines such as heartburn, feelings of fullness, vomiting, headaches, anxiety, depression, a foggy mind and fibromyalgia-like symptoms.

For those allergic to wheat or other grains containing gluten or that have gluten-related disorders, permanently eliminating gluten is a must. This includes inhaling it, eating it and encountering it through skin or hair.

Gluten and the Gut

Gluten is a protein found in grains such as wheat, spelt, semolina, farro, barley and rye. These grains are a source of fiber, B vitamins, trace minerals and other nutrients. Many studies have associated whole-grain consumption with improved health outcomes. For instance, as part of a healthy diet, wheat has been found to reduce the risk of diabetes, heart disease and weight gain.

Gluten interplays with the bacteria in the gut. The journal *Nutrients* published a review in 2021 of various studies that evaluated the effects of a gluten-free diet on the microbiome of healthy, celiac disease and NCGS patients. The researchers found that a

gluten-free diet reduced the bacterial richness and affected gut microbiota composition of patients in all three groups. In patients with celiac disease or NCGS, the gluten-free diet created a positive effect on gastrointestinal symptoms and helped restore microbiota population by reducing the population of pro-inflammatory species. However, in healthy patients, a gluten-free diet had a negative effect on the gut by decreasing the number of beneficial species and increasing the number of bad microorganisms.

According to the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, changes in the amount or activity of good bacteria have been associated with gastrointestinal diseases such as inflammatory bowel disease, colorectal cancer and irritable bowel syndrome.

“Changes in your diet can alter your microbiome within one to two days,” says Dr. Tom O’Bryan, an expert on wheat-related disorders, NCGS, celiac disease and their link to autoimmune diseases. “When you go on a gluten-free diet, you remove prebiotics that feed the good bacteria in your gut. This then causes the bad bacteria to flourish and reproduce, resulting in increased inflammation



in your gut, a contributor to disease.” This makes sense as 70 to 80 percent of immune cells are present in the gut.

Effective Gluten-Free Dieting

Whether a gluten-free diet is required because of a gluten-related disorder or by choice, it is essential to add prebiotic foods to replace the beneficial impacts lost when eliminating wheat and other grains. Prebiotic and probiotic supplements are a start, but consumption of vegetables is the key.

“Probiotics are most effective when they are combined with a high-fiber diet featuring a variety of vegetables,” says O’Bryan. He recommends at least one daily serving of root vegetables, such as rutabaga, turnip, parsnip, radish, carrot and sweet potato, and two daily servings of prebiotic foods like bananas, garlic, onion, asparagus, leafy green vegetables, legumes, artichoke, apples and cocoa. “I also recommend a forkful or more of fermented foods each day. Vary it up with some sauerkraut, kimchi, miso or fermented beets, or drink some kefir or kombucha.”

“If you’re experiencing digestive discomfort, give a healthy, gluten-free diet a try for at least 30 days and assess how you feel,” recommends Michelle Ross, a board-certified nutrition specialist, licensed dietician and functional medicine practitioner. “My recommendation is to stay away from the gluten-free aisle. The truth is many people that switch to a gluten-free diet often turn to

processed gluten-free foods. The focus should be on consuming whole, real, unprocessed foods.”

Finding Balance

Even for those without gluten-related conditions, too much gluten can create its own health complications. In a 2015 study published in *Nutrients*, gliadin, a component of gluten, was administered to biopsies taken from the small intestines of healthy, celiac disease and NCGS patients. The researchers found each group experienced increases in inflammatory markers and in markers of leaky gut, with the healthy group having the greatest increase in interleukin 10, a rapidly activated pro-inflammatory cytokine that defends the body against microbial invasion.

For otherwise healthy people, finding a balance between enough gluten to feed gut probiotics but not so much that it results in gut permeability issues is important. “If you decide to continue consuming gluten, opt for whole or minimally processed einkorn wheat, rye, barley, spelt and Kamut wheat,” says Ross. “These grains have not undergone hybridization and are not typically sprayed with glyphosate before harvesting. Additionally, consider consuming sprouted or fermented forms of these grains, as they can be more digestible.”

Deborah Bevilacqua is a journalist and contributor to Natural Awakenings Publishing Corporation.



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Kafta Kabobs

YIELD: 12 TO 14 SKEWERS

*1 large yellow onion
3 sprigs fresh, flat-leaf parsley leaves, finely minced
2 lbs finely ground lean lamb or beef
1 tsp sea salt
½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
½ tsp ground allspice
12-14 wooden or metal skewers, presoaked in water
for 30-60 minutes*

Preheat a grill to high, or if using an oven, preheat to 450° F.

Quarter the onion and finely mince in a food processor. Transfer the minced onions into a fine-mesh sieve set over a bowl and press down on the onions to remove any excess liquid. Discard the liquid and set the onions aside.

Add the parsley to the food processor and pulse to finely chop. Return the drained onions to the food processor bowl. Add the ground meat and season with the salt, pepper and allspice. Process to thoroughly blend all the ingredients, periodically pausing the processor to push the meat down and scrape it from the bottom and sides of the bowl. Transfer the meat mixture to a large mixing bowl. Hand-mix the meat mixture to make sure that all ingredients are evenly incorporated into a smooth mixture.

Making the Kafta Kabobs

Working in ⅓-cup portions, mold the meat mixture into a long, sausage-like shape, about 6 inches in length. Then, hand-roll the meat to a thickness of about 1½ inches. Using the sharp end of the skewer, pierce through one end of the kabob and slide it through the other end; the meat should be about 1 inch away from the sharp tip of the skewer. Squeeze the meat one more time to ensure that it tightly adheres to the skewer. Continue making kabobs in the same manner with the remaining meat mixture. There should be 12 to 14 skewers.

If using a grill, lightly brush it with oil. Place the kabobs on the grill over a medium flame and cook, turning them periodically so that they cook evenly, 4 to 5 minutes per side, being careful not to over-grill them.

If roasting in the oven, place the kabobs on a lightly oiled baking sheet, spacing them evenly apart, and roast on the middle rack of the oven for 12 to 15 minutes, turning them over halfway through the roasting time. Serve hot.

Recipe courtesy of Anna Cabeça.



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Easy Fertility Kitchari (Quinoa and Bean Stew)

YIELD: 6 SERVINGS

2 cups dried mung beans, soaked in water for 8-12 hours
 1 Tbsp coconut oil, ghee or olive oil
 1 onion, finely chopped
 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
 1 tsp ground cumin
 14 oz spinach, kale, collards or any other greens
 2 tsp Celtic sea salt
 1 13.5 oz can full-fat coconut milk
 2 cups quinoa
 7½ cups water
 Optional: cilantro, avocado

Heat oil in a pressure cooker (such as an Instant Pot); add onion, garlic and cumin. Sauté until fragrant; stir occasionally. Add greens, soaked mung beans, quinoa and water. Put the lid on, and pressure cook for 12 minutes. Once pressure has fully released, open the lid and stir in coconut milk. Top it off with fresh avocado and cilantro before serving.

Recipe courtesy of Aumatma Simmons.

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Natural Births

A Look at Modern Midwifery

by Maya Whitman



Life's most wondrous gifts are the babies that come into the world every day, but the clinical birth environment is not always an ideal choice for everyone. Modern midwifery, a safe

alternative, honors its ancient roots by aiming to provide a comfortable and beautiful passage for both mommas and little ones. In countries like France, Sweden and Japan, midwives are involved in almost 75 percent

of deliveries at birth centers, homes and hospitals. The practice is less popular in the U.S., with only 12 percent involving midwives in 2020.

"The birth experience became very medicalized at the turn of the last century out of necessity. However, midwives have been delivering babies for centuries in all types of settings. Birth is a natural process that does not necessarily need to take place within the confines of the hospital setting," says Paul Quinn, a certified nurse-midwife in Ridgewood, New Jersey, and author of several books, including *Prenatal Possibilities: Recipes for a Healthy Pregnancy...and Beyond*.

Prenatal and perinatal psychologist Susan Highsmith, in Tucson, Arizona, notes, "Care in birth centers and at home can be far more personal. For women who experience low-risk pregnancies, a natural, home birth or birth-center birth can be a satisfying and safe alternative to a hospital birth. There are a host of benefits for the baby that are not possible in hospital settings where protocols take precedence."

One of the advantages of a natural birth is the mother-child bonding encouraged in a non-clinical setting. "Babies should not be placed in nurseries, but should be immediately placed on the mother's body and allowed to seek and find the breast,"



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Highsmith explains. "Being taken away from the mother, as is frequently done in hospitals, is anathema."

Midwives and Doulas

Aside from facilitating the birth process, midwives can provide medical care, prescribe medications and order blood tests and imaging. Many are nurses and well-versed in any situation that might arise before, during and after labor.

Doulas focus on nonclinical care by providing physical and emotional comfort, keeping expectant mothers informed and facilitating communication with the midwives and obstetricians on the team. For Brooke Stenzler, a relationship coach in Bradenton, Florida, bringing a doula onto her birth team was an unexpected blessing. "It freed up my husband to be present in a different way, and the doula provided the tender, maternal care that I needed," she says. "Prior to the birth, I met with my midwife for regular prenatal checkups. She came to my house a month or so prior to the expected birth date to make sure everything was set up properly for a home birth. I also had a couple of meetings with my doula prior to the birth, so she could get clear on my goals and needs. She also provided a prenatal massage."

Stenzler and her brothers were all home-birth babies, so when it came time to plan her own pregnancy, choosing to have a midwife and a doula was an effortless decision. Her own midwife was seasoned, thus earning her confidence. "She knew what signs to look for if there were a serious situation that might require transferring to a hospital," she says. "I trusted that she would let me know if she felt that was necessary."

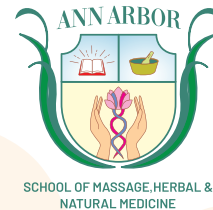
Taking the Helm

Choosing to partner with a midwife and/or doula can be the first big step in a happy, healthy birth, but there are some things to consider. State laws differ as to what a midwife can and cannot do, and insurance coverage varies from company to company. Thorough research is recommended to avoid any last-minute surprises.

Quinn recommends beginning a search for the right person as early as possible. "Not all midwives or doulas practice the same. There needs to be a sense of trust, and a woman needs to choose someone who makes her feel safe, heard, respected and valued," he advises. "It's okay to ask focused questions and inquire about a midwife or doula's education. Ask for references. Check the internet for reviews, both good and bad, and verify if licensure is applicable. It's also a good idea to check for any disciplinary action from the state."

Bringing the next generation into the world is a hard job, one that demands support for body, mind and spirit. "Ask any questions that relieve fears, doubt or uncertainty beforehand. This is a mutually loving and, literally, life-enhancing relationship," says Highsmith. "Birth is a sacred event, which deserves reverence."

Maya Whitman is a regular writer for Natural Awakenings.



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WEDNESDAY, MAY 1

Wonder Walk: Spring Migration – 5:30-6:30pm. All ages. Free. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. mbgna.umich.edu.

THURSDAY, MAY 2

Breeding Bird Survey Kickoff – 7-9pm. Learn how to survey for breeding birds in Ann Arbor's parks. Learn how to use eBird to record survey results, sign up to survey your favorite park, hear about last year's survey, and access the survey materials. Experience in bird identification necessary. Register: Tinyurl.com/zkt49jxb.

FRIDAY, MAY 3

Sound Bath Meditation – 7-8:30pm. Join Rob Meyer-Kukan for this sound bath meditation. In this time of sound bath, Rob will play singing bowls, gongs, and more with the intention of washing you with the sounds that bring calming vibrations to reduce stress and ease tension. \$40. 7 Notes Natural Health, 3830 Packard Rd, Ste 120, Ann Arbor. Required registration: 248-962-5475 or Facebook.com/events/1063345394872741.

SATURDAY, MAY 4

Workday at Sharon Hills Preserve – 10am-12pm. Volunteers will help remove invasive species garlic mustard. Sharon Hills Preserve, Sharon Hollow Rd, Sharon. LegacyLandConservancy.org.

World Labyrinth Day Labyrinth Walk – 1-2pm. With Veriditas Certified Advanced Labyrinth Facilitator, Rob Meyer-Kukan. Includes an ASL interpreter and finger labyrinths. Suggested donation: \$10. Webster United Church of Christ, 5484 Webster Church Rd, Dexter. Facebook.com/events/2295425060653276.

SUNDAY, MAY 5

Stewardship Workday: Sunset Brooks Nature Area – 9am-12pm. Help pulling invasive weeds. Tools and know-how provided. Free. Meet at the park entrance on Sunset Rd, at the end of Brooks St, Ann Arbor. Pre-registration required: Tinyurl.com/yc4cnj29.

MONDAY, MAY 6

Tai Chi Chua and Chi Kung Spring/Summer Classes – May 6-Aug 8. Early bird registration by Apr 20 and get a \$10 savings. Use code: ss2024 when registering online Peaceful Dragon School, 1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor. 734-741-0695. PeacefulDragonSchool.com.

Yoga Therapy for Metastatic Breast Cancer – Mondays, May 6-June 24. 8:30-10am. With Catherine Franklin, founder

of True Evolution. Sessions include therapeutic yoga, compassionate discussion and group support during and between sessions. \$295; sliding scale offered. For more info or to register: 734-864-2694 or Catherine@TrueEvolutionYoga.com. TrueEvolutionYoga.com.

Wine and Wills – 4:30-6:30pm. A casual discussion about high-impact giving through planned gifts. Gladwin Center, 4105 W Liberty Rd, Ann Arbor. More info & to RSVP: LegacyLandConservancy.org.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 8

Walk on the Wild Side: Matthaei in May – 6:45-8:45pm. Calla Butler, Native Plant Horticulturalist at Matthaei, will lead us through the early season of native plant communities providing cues for the conditions they require to thrive. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, Great Lakes Garden, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. AnnArbor.WildOnes.org.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SATURDAY, JUNE 15

Eckankar Presents Creative Problem Solving: Awaken Your Potential – 6-8pm. 11am-4:30pm. Problem solving becomes an opportunity to tap into our creative imagination, offering solutions without limitations, while ensuring we gain love, wisdom and a closer relationship with God in the process. This call of Soul goes out to spiritual seekers of all ages. Cost is free. Dexter Library, 3255 Alpine, Dexter. 248-546-9224. eckmi.org/events

Open Stage – 8pm. Take your music to the masses. Open Stage nights offer supportive audiences and a terrific space. Fifteen performers have 8 mins (or 2 songs) each to do their thing. \$3, \$2/members, seniors, students. The Ark, 316 S Main St, Ann Arbor. TheArk.org.

FRIDAY, MAY 10

New Moon Night Hike – 7:30-9pm. Enjoy a night hike under the stars to celebrate the alignment of the moon and the sun. We will do some science experiments out on the trail and visit some of LSNC's nocturnal animals. \$5. Leslie Science & Nature Center, 1831 Traver Rd, Ann Arbor. Registration required: DiscoverScienceAndNature.org.

SATURDAY, MAY 11

Herbal Allies for Mental Health – 10am-12pm. Learn how herbs can support us through seasonal depression, anxiety, pan-

ic disorders and calm our nervous systems. Bloodroot Herb Shop, 208 W Michigan Ave, Ypsilanti. BloodrootHerbShop.com.

Workday at Beckwith Preserve – 10am-12pm. Help remove invasive species' garlic mustard and dame's rocket. Meet at the parking lot off M-106 on the east side of Stockbridge, 2792 E M 106, Stockbridge. LegacyLandConservancy.org.

Spring Plant Sale – May 11-12. 10am-4:30pm. Includes planters and hanging baskets that have been designed and tended by a team of dedicated volunteers. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. mbgna.umich.edu.

Calm Your Anxiety Today – 1-4pm. Learn powerful practices you can do at home to support yourself and create lasting peace in your daily life. This gentle to moderate movement practice is suitable for most people with some experience of yoga/meditation. Instructor, Julie Woodward. \$50. 180 Little Lake Dr, Ste 1, Ann Arbor. Julie-Woodward.com.

SUNDAY, MAY 12

Wonder Walk: Trillium Trek – 1-2pm. All ages. Free. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. mbgna.umich.edu.

TUESDAY, MAY 14

Ann Arbor Backyard Beekeepers Meeting – 7-9pm. Dr. Kaira Wagoner, Ph.D., Research Scientist in the Biology Department at the University of North Carolina Greensboro, will delve into the theme of Honeybee Hygiene and Health. Zoom. mbgna.umich.edu.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15

Resonant Relaxation: Weekday Sound Bath – 10-11am. With sound therapist, Rob Meyer-Kukan. Relax into a zero-gravity chair and float into this time of deep relaxation. \$30. 7 Notes Natural Health, 3830 Packard Rd, Ste 120, Ann Arbor. Required registration: 248-962-5475 or Facebook.com/events/311524141953179.

SATURDAY, MAY 18

Morning Mindfulness Hike – 9:30-11am. Spend the morning connecting with the woods, wetlands and all the spring flowers and discover the joy and tranquility of simple immersion in nature. Led by naturalist Elle Bogle and mindfulness instructor Julie Woodward. Miller-Smith Preserve, 8560 Dexter-Chelsea Rd, Dexter. Pre-registration required: Washtenaw.org.

Health & Wellness Fair – 10am-4pm. Better Health Market will be hosting some of their favorite local healers and wellness practitioners along with a few

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 16-19

Dr. Chi Fingernail and Tongue Analysis Clinics – Monday, September 16, through Thursday September 19. Chi is a world-renowned expert in the Eastern medical art of fingernail and tongue evaluation. He travels the globe teaching clinicians and evaluating patients with many medical conditions. All visits are by appointment only. Call to schedule your appointment. Wycoff Wellness Center, 1226 Michigan Ave, East Lansing. 517-333-7270.

special guests. Free. Better Health Market Novi, 42875 Grand River Ave, Novi. BetterHealthMarket.com.

Kitchen Favorites Plant Sale – May 18-19. 10am-4:30pm. Includes a variety of vegetables and herbs seedlings tended by students and staff from the Campus Farm. Matthaei Botanical Gardens, 1800 N Dixboro Rd, Ann Arbor. mbgna.umich.edu.

SUNDAY, MAY 19

Stewardship Workday: Black Pond Woods – 9am-12pm. Celebrate and protect Black Pond Woods for the UN International Day for Biodiversity. Tools and know-how provided. Free. Meet at the park entrance on Tibbits Crt, off Pontiac Trl, Ann Arbor. Pre-registration required: [Tinyurl.com/y8bk7f2h](https://tinyurl.com/y8bk7f2h).

TUESDAY, MAY 21

VegMichigan Monthly Dinner Club – 6-7:30pm. Join us for some fabulous East African food. Baobab Fare, 6568 Woodward Ave, Ste 100, Detroit. VegMichigan.org.

FRIDAY, MAY 31

Fireside Fun – 5:30-9pm. There's nothing quite as relaxing as sitting around a campfire, roasting marshmallows and swapping stories. Free. Leslie Science & Nature Center, 1831 Traver Rd, Ann Arbor. DiscoverScienceAndNature.org.

PLAN AHEAD

SUNDAY JUNE 2

VegMichigan's Spring Vegfest – 10am-4pm. There will be nearly 100 food, shopping, and non-profit vendors, free samples, cooking demos, a kid zone and more. Free admission. Eastern Market, Sheds 5 & 6, Detroit. VegMichigan.org.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

Dr. Chi Fingernail and Tongue Analysis FREE Seminar – 6-8pm. Chi is a world-renowned expert in the Eastern medical art of fingernail and tongue evaluation. He travels the globe teaching clinicians and evaluating patients with many medical conditions. Please reserve your seat by contacting the office. Wycoff Wellness Center, 1226 Michigan Ave, East Lansing. 517-333-7270.



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Ayurveda For Us – Provides online consultations, where clients receive personalized guidance to address chronic health issues and reclaim their vitality. With a focus on diet, herbalism, mental and spiritual healing and lifestyle adjustments, Ayurveda offers a holistic approach to wellness. To schedule a free 30-min discovery call: [Calendly.com/d/4dc-gws-6fw/discovery-call](https://calendly.com/d/4dc-gws-6fw/discovery-call). For more info & appt: AyurvedaFor.us.

Herbs for the Southeast Michigan Garden – Learn how to grow and use 20 culinary and medicinal herbs suited for the southeast Michigan garden. Will cover preservation techniques, basic medicine making and crafting herbal oils, poultices, infused honeys and vinegars plus more. Free. More info & register: CastleRemedies.podia.com.

Introduction to Homeopathy Class – Learn how to choose remedies and how to use them. Class contains nearly 4 hrs of pre-recorded videos. Downloadable resources. \$75. More info & register: CastleRemedies.podia.com.

Holistic Health Consultation – 9am-7pm. Online or phone consultation consultations last about 1 hr and are provided by Certified Xolar Vibronics Holistic Educator and Life Coach Ikaro Phoenix. Be introduced to various techniques, elements or holistic ways of viewing the situation which help the soul to be reeducated and empowered to deal with problems and eliminate them from their root. \$150. For appt: LivingWisdomCoaching.earth.

Pets & Parents Reiki Session – 9am-9pm. Sessions for wellness, critical care and end-of-life transition. Actively experience the use of reiki touch with your pet. Learn additional tips for helping your pet. Virtual 40-min appt. \$20. 231-590-0001. tcdesoto@gmail.com.

The Best Affirmation for You – 10am. Learn about the power of affirmations and how they can bring about positive events and circumstances. Call for a 10-15-min consultation with a licensed professional counselor to pick the best affirmation for you. Purchase an affirmation stone to enhance what you are affirming in your life by having a visible reminder. Free. 734-644-6943. Harmony2c.com/affirmation-stones.

Tiny Lions Lounge & Adoption Center (TLC) – 12-7pm, Wed-Sun. Offers feline-friendly activities with kittens and cats available to take home. 5245 Jackson Rd, Ste A1, 734-661-3575. TinyLions.org.

WEEKLY

Yoga with Crysterra Wellness – Variety of classes Tues-Thurs. Cost varies. For schedule & details: CrysterraWellness.com.

Stop Sabotaging Your Self-Care – Christy DeBurton will guide you on a journey of self-discovery to examine the obstacles that stand in the way of you taking better care of yourself. 4-wk self-paced online course. \$79 (regular \$149). Yoga Room, 889 Honey Creek Dr, Ann Arbor. Info@ChristyDeBurton.com. YogaRoomAnnArbor.com/online-courses-self-care.

SUNDAYS

Bach Flower Remedies Level 1 Live Web – 3rd Sun. Learn how to use the 38 Bach flower remedies to help yourself and others conquer fear, worry, overwhelm, low self-esteem, lack of focus, poor concentration, trouble sleeping and more. With Nancy Buono, BFCP, Director of Bach Flower Education. BachFlowerSchool.com.

Hudson Valley Humane Society Rescue Reading – 10am-12pm. Includes humane education lessons, group read-aloud and dog meet-and-greet. Drop-off event. \$10; space limited. HSHV.org/RescueReading.



Online Meditation from Anywhere – 11am-12pm. Building an international sangha by connecting loving hearts. Donations welcome. To receive a link: CelesteZygmunt2@yahoo.com or DeepSpring.org.

Sunday Talk with Demo Rinpoche – 11am-12pm. Jewel Heart Tibetan Buddhist Learning Center, 1129 Oak Valley Dr, Ann Arbor. 734-994-3387. JewelHeart.org.

Inspiring Talk by Mata Yogananda – 7pm. Spiritual talk, pure meditation and silent prayer, with Winged Prayer for all in need at 9pm. Free. Self-Realization Meditation Healing Centre, 7187 Drumheller, Bath. 517-641-6201. SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org.

MONDAYS

Weekday Morning Online Meditation – Mon-Fri. 7:30-8am. Insight Meditation Ann Arbor offers a 30-min online group sitting via Zoom. Free, donations gratefully accepted. InsightMeditationAnnArbor.org.

Beginner Tai Chi – 10-11:15am. A series of postures linked together in a fluid

manner. Focuses on relaxation in motion, balance and the mind/body connection. Can attend one or both sessions per week (Mon morning &/or Thurs evening). \$195. Peaceful Dragon School, 1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor. 734-741-0695. PeacefulDragonSchool.com.

Soul Power Mystic Arts – 5pm. 2nd Mon & Wed. Re-claim the real you, hear your evolutionary calling and cultivate the nature mystic within through 4 retreats, individual training, self-acceptance process, nature qi-gong, plant ally ceremonies and body-ecology psychology. Sliding scale. Mother Bear Sanctuary, 20470 Barton, Pinckney. 734-796-6690. MotherBearSanctuary.com.

Meaningful Mondays – 8pm. SevaLight Retreat Centre warmly welcomes everyone, of all faiths, meditation practices and traditions, to join us virtually. Will gather on video conference sharing in song/chants and inspiring readings from Mata Yogananda Mahasaya Dharmaji's writings, followed by Pure Meditation and silent prayer. Free. Email by 10am any Mon to receive the info about how to join by video: Info@SelfRealizationCentreMichigan.org.

TUESDAYS

Senior Discount Tuesdays: Castle Remedies – Customers over the age of 65 can receive a 10% discount on their in-store purchases. In the Parkway Center, 2345 S Huron Pkwy, Ann Arbor. 734-973-8990. CastleRemedies.com.

Online Meditation from Anywhere – 9-9:30am. Building an international sangha by connecting loving hearts. Donations welcome. To receive a link: CelesteZygmunt2@yahoo.com or DeepSpring.org.

Hypnotherapy – 9:30am-7pm, by appt. Also Wed. Cheryl Beshada teaches and specializes in personal empowerment, releasing blocks and patterns of negative behavior, higher self-communication. Free consultation. Warren. 586-899-9009.

5 Hidden Gems in Your Normal Blood Work – 8-9pm. 3rd Tues. Join Dr. Jena for her Bloodwork Webinar and learn 5 hidden gems that can help you go from unhealthy to healthy. Free. BigBeautifulChiropractic.com.

WEDNESDAYS

Get the Most from Your DNA Test – 6-8pm. Learn what you can do with your results and what additional opportunities are available for discovering your genetic genealogy. Understand the science, how to find information and how to share that information. Course 39651. \$59. Washtenaw Community College, 4800 E Huron River Dr, Ann Arbor. 734-677-5060. wccnet.edu/noncredit.

Your Lipid Panel: What Bad Cholesterol Really Means – 8-9pm. 3rd Wed. Grab your latest bloodwork and let's dive into your

blood work and let me teach you how to look for hidden answers. Free. BigBeautifulChiropractic.com.

THURSDAYS

Class Observation – 11-11:45am. Ann Arbor School of Massage, Herbal and Natural Medicine, 3684 W Liberty Rd, Ann Arbor. RSVP: 734-769-7794. NaturopathicSchoolOfAnnArbor.net.

Qigong: Basics – 11:15am-12:15pm. Class introduces participants to basic self-care stretches, breathing, meditations and self-acupressure for reducing muscle tension, increasing mindfulness, and revitalization. \$180. Peaceful Dragon School, 1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor. 734-741-0695. PeacefulDragonSchool.com.

Beginner Tai Chi – 6-7:15pm. A series of postures linked together in fluid manner. Focuses on relaxation in motion, balance and the mind/body connection. Can attend one or both sessions per week (Mon morning &/or Thurs evening). \$195. Peaceful Dragon School, 1945 Pauline Blvd, Ste B, Ann Arbor. 734-741-0695. PeacefulDragonSchool.com.

Thursday Hills of Ann Arbor – 6:30pm. We ride some of the best hills A2 has to offer. A/B/C: 10-40 miles. Start at Wheels in Motion, 3402 Washtenaw Ave Ann Arbor. WheelsInMotion.us.

Thursday Evening Silent Meditation – 6:30-8:15pm. With Insight Meditation Ann Arbor. Free, donations gratefully accepted. Zion Lutheran Church, 1501 W Liberty St, Ann Arbor. 734-994-4455. InsightMeditationAnnArbor.org.

The Thyroid Panel: Get the Real Story of What's Happening with Your Thyroid – 8-9pm. 3rd Thurs. Learn how to find hidden answers in the bloodwork that you already have so that you can finally get some answers as to why you feel the way you do. Free. BigBeautifulChiropractic.com.

FRIDAYS

Online: Prayer Power Hour – 12-12:30pm. Prayer changes things. Our goal is simple: to love you, pray for you and introduce you to our loving Creator, the Great Healer. Free. Tinyurl.com/PrayerPowerHour.

SATURDAYS

Certified Hypnotherapists Education and Networking Meeting – 9:30am-12pm. 1st Sat. Certified Hypnotherapists welcome. Includes educational presentation, workbook and digital material. Clinical Hypnosis Professional Group, Warren. Register: 586-899-9009.

Pregnancy, Childbirth, Postpartum and Baby Classes – 6-7pm. Classes are held virtually online led by our top AID instructors utilizing state of the art visual aids

and activities to keep it fun and engaging while presenting the latest evidenced based material on each topic. \$35/class. Childbirth-Classes.com.

Drum and Dance Jam – 7:30-9pm. 1st Sat (Apr, May, June, Aug). Bring a drum with you or use a drum that is provided. \$5 donation requested at the door. Interfaith Center for Spiritual Growth, 704 Airport Blvd, Ann Arbor. InterfaithSpirit.org.



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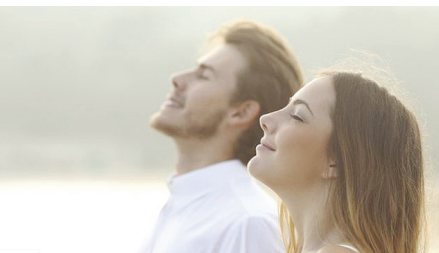
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Education

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MiraculousEnergies.com



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Holistic Doctor

DR. MALCOLM SICKELS, M.D.

210 Little Lake Dr, Ste 10, Ann Arbor
734-332-9936
DrSickels.com



Malcolm Sickels earned his M.D. from the University of Michigan, where he taught fellow medical students about different approaches to health. Board certified in Family

Medicine and Holistic Medicine, he is in solo practice on the west side of Ann Arbor. Learn more at Dr.Sickels.com. See ads, pages 8 and 13.

Holistic Mental Wellness

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Karen Kerr, LMSW
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(734) 660-5610
Karen8Kerr@gmail.com
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Lymphatic Bodywork/ Reiki

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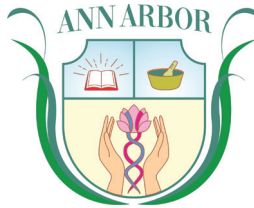
We offer the holistic community a nature-oriented meeting space for workshops, meetings, counseling, yoga, youth groups and family gatherings. Main room accommodates 100 pre-COVID-19, with two smaller classrooms and kitchen facilities. Hiking trails. Weekend rates range from \$200-

\$400, additional for extensive grounds use, camping. See ad page 13.

School/Education

ANN ARBOR SCHOOL OF MASSAGE, HERBAL & NATURAL MEDICINE

734-769-7794
NSHAAssociates@gmail.com
NaturopathicSchoolOfAnnArbor.net



SCHOOL OF MASSAGE, HERBAL &
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Massage therapy training is a one-year program that fulfills the 717-hour, state-licensed professional training with the required 80 hours of clinical internship. The rate for scheduled, Tuesday through Friday ap-

pointments at our student massage clinic is \$50/hr. See ad page 23.

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ad page 9.

Tai Chi & Qigong

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734-741-0695
PeacefulDragonSchool.com



Tai chi promotes relaxation, is a meditation in motion and is known for increasing balance. Qigong means energy. This class includes Wild Goose Form, stretching, meditation and self-acupressure.

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Wellness Center

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A DOCUMENTARY FILM BY HIDEYUKI TOKIGAWA

MEMORIES FOR LIFE

REVERSING ALZHEIMER'S

NARRATED BY
MICHAEL BUBLÉ

"Like so many families, I have been deeply affected by Alzheimer's, so I was thrilled to become a part of this film when I realized that there's hope, and it's not just a death sentence."

- Michael Bublé



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We Have a Choice

In times like today, when every aspect of society seems to be in chaos, one easy response is to escape—through drugs, alcohol, comfort food, non-stop entertainment or any other convenient mind-numbing practice. Many are defaulting to this “cure” for their discomfort. Others, feeling insecure, angry, and demanding change, agitate to take society back to what they remember as the “good old days.” They may not be clear about what exactly made the past better, but are more than willing to listen to people who place the blame for current troubles anywhere but where it actually belongs: on economic inequality and injustice.

A Major Transition

Most of us forget that another choice is possible. We can create a future completely different from the present or the past—one that expresses our most deeply felt desires to live together in peace, happiness, and prosperity. In fact, this choice is being reinforced, or perhaps stimulated, by the planetary energies now at play. We are currently in the midst of a major transition between two ages — moving from the Age of Pisces into the Age of Aquarius, and such transitions tend to create chaos as the energies of the two constellations involved compete with each other. The energies of Pisces support individuality and devotion to separate religions or causes, while Aquarian energies promote cooperation, group efforts, synthesis, and brotherhood. As our planet moves closer to Aquarius, the

polarization and divisions among people and ideas will diminish, and we will find more common ground.

So, now is the time to take advantage of the energies and to put forth visions of a world that would benefit all people—not just a few. In mundane terms, we need to expand the “Overton window”—the range of ideas that voters find acceptable—to include ideas that are not currently in the public eye—ideas that might at first be considered idealistic or even impossible to attain. For politicians to support policies outside of the window would be political suicide, as they would not be seen as legitimate options by society. Therefore, since it’s politicians who will be deciding the policies that will determine our future, we need to voice our desires for the kind of world we want, to make sure they are among the available options in the public discourse.

The Key: A Unified Vision of Sharing and Justice

How do we bring our ideas forward? The key is to have a unified vision, to voice it in large numbers, and to do so powerfully. Fortunately, we don’t have to do this alone. We have help in the form of the great spiritual teacher—Maitreya by name—who is here to accompany our transition into the Aquarian age, and we will see him soon. He has said that peace can be established and our societal ills transformed by simply sharing planetary resources more equitably, creating justice in every societal institution, and restoring and

preserving our environment. We can count on him to galvanize people of goodwill to champion these priorities when he appears publicly, but we can start now.

We can talk about the future we want to our friends and relatives, call and write the president and our Congressional representatives on a regular basis about it, and spread the ideas through our social media outlets. There is power in numbers, and the 99% of us non-wealthy are by definition the majority. We just need to project our vision of sharing and justice powerfully in as unified a way as possible everywhere, and together we can create a future that works for everyone.

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In *The World Teacher for All Humanity*, Benjamin Creme discusses the extraordinary ramifications of Maitreya’s appearance and teachings. Awaken to a world of infinite possibility if we’re all willing to share!





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